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Maryland National Guard Continues Deployment of Troops And Equipment to Gulf Coast

ANNAPOLIS - Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. today authorized the further deployment of Maryland National Guardsmen to assist the State of Mississippi with its relief effort.

This latest group of Guardsmen, which includes more than 100 soldiers from 1229th Transportation Company based in Parkville, Md., and Crisfield, Md., and other units across Maryland will assist with security and logistics in the region. Like those who have deployed within the past week, these soldiers are veterans of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"The State of Maryland continues to offer any and all assistance possible in the wake of Hurricane Katrina's devastation," said Governor Ehrlich. "In addition to the robust support of the Maryland Army and Air National Guard, we are making unprecedented use of the Maryland Defense Force, deploying medical and other professionals from Maryland into the affected region for the first time in the organization's history. We will continue to do all we can in the days and weeks ahead."

In addition to the unprecedented use of the Maryland Defense Force, the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, under the provisions of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, has played a key role in the coordination and development of medical support from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Yesterday, 70 medical professionals from Maryland deployed on two Maryland Air National Guard C-130J's to Louisiana, where they will lend medical assistance and support to those affected by Hurricane Katrina.

This latest request, like all previous ones, falls under the provision of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, an agreement between 49 states and two territories to provide resources to each other when disasters strike. It also was coordinated through the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, a branch of the Maryland Military Department.

The deployment, which includes two separate flights of Maryland Air National Guard C-130J's, brings the total number of deployed Maryland Army and Air National Guardsmen in the affected region to nearly 320.

Today's deployment brings the total number of flights flown in support of the relief effort by the Maryland Air National Guard's 135th Airlift Group to 12. The 135th Airlift Group and associated units of the Maryland Air National Guard's 175th Wing are fully expecting to be tasked with additional flights throughout the next several days, at a minimum rate of two flights per day.

The two Maryland Air National Guard C-130J's along with their cargo of soldiers and equipment will depart today for Mississippi at 2:00 p.m. from Warfield Air National Guard Base at the Martin State Airport in Middle River, Md.

The Maryland Military Department is comprised of the Maryland Army National Guard, Maryland Air National Guard, Maryland Emergency Management Agency and the Maryland Defense Force. The Military Department consists of more than 7,000 full-time and traditional members contributing nearly \$333 million annually to Maryland's economy.

Since 9-11 the Maryland National Guard has deployed more than 4,300 citizen-soldiers and airmen to nearly 30 different countries in support of the Global War on Terror. Currently we have more than 88 percent of our total force available to perform in a state emergency.

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